MAKE YOUR BUSINESS GROW. ADVERTISE IN
DAWN INDUSTRY SUPPLEMENTS
Call Manager Supplements in Karachi Lahore or Islamabad on UAN: 111-444-777

DAWN

PHOENIX BATTERIES
GADI CHAHE KOI BHI HO
PHOENIX LAGA AUR BHOL JA
Century Engineering Industries (Pvt.) Ltd.
UNDER LICENCE OF KUKJE INDUSTRY BATTERY CO., LTD. KOREA

# Civil society rallies in support of Imaan, Hadi

• Activists outraged after police block access to Karachi Press Club; term seige assault on democratic freedoms
• Capital lawyers observe strike, hold protest outside IHC

By Imtiaz Ali and Malik Asad

KARACHI/ISLAMABAD: Lawyers and civil society rallied in support of activists Imaan Zainab Mazari-Hazir and her husband Hadi Ali Chattha — who were recently sentenced to 17 years in prison over controversial social media posts — as several bar associations announced a strike.

But while the demonstration in the capital went off without a hitch, the protest in Karachi was virtually scuttled when law enforcement personnel blocked off all access to the Karachi Press Club on Monday afternoon.

The closure of roads slowed down the movement of traffic on several arteries in the downtown area, causing inconvenience for commuters from I.I. Chundrigar Road to Saddar and beyond.

A small group of demonstrators who managed to reach the press club did stage a token demonstration to register their protest.

These included academic Tauseef Ahmed Khan, journalists Mazhar Abbas and Fazil Jamili, Tahir Hassan Khan and Saeed Sarbazi, HRCP's Asad Iqbal Butt, among others.

But most protesters were held up by the hurdles put in place by the authorities, who barred many protesters including activists Zulfikar Ali Bhutto Jr and Sheema Kermani, from reaching the press club — a move the KPC president termed a violation of the fundamental right to peaceful assembly.

"The siege of the Karachi Press Club today is a blatant assault on democratic freedoms. By cordoning off the KPC and barring citizens, including Zulfiqar Bhutto Jr., from protesting the sentencing of Imaan Mazari, authorities are violating the fundamental right to peaceful assembly," Mr Jamili posted on social media platform X.

Zulfikar Jr and Ms Kermani staged a sit-in at the KPC Roundabout when they were stopped from reaching the press club.

"We are being deprived of fundamental human rights. I want to participate in the protest, but participation in the protest has become a crime," Zulfikar Jr said.

Later, senior lawyer Barrister Salahuddin Ahmed, rights activist Jibran Nasir and several other lawyers, human rights activists and civil society members also reached KPC to register their protest.

Condemning the conviction of the couple handed down by a sessions court in Islamabad on Jan 24, Barrister Ahmed was of the view that it was not only the violation of fair trial, but also against the freedom of expression, which was also protected in the Constitution.

Mr Nasir also strongly denounced the sentence and asserted that all roads leading to KPC have been blocked as the state wanted to deny journalists, lawyers and civil society the right to protest and expose the sham trial and conviction.

"This conviction is an act of theft and robbery, and the state is now trying to cover it up as well", he alleged.

**Protest in Islamabad**

Meanwhile, in the capital, lawyers led by IHC Bar President Syed Wajid Ali Gilani staged a protest at the main gate of the high court.

The Islamabad High Court Bar Association (IHCBA), IBC and Islamabad District Bar jointly announced a strike. However, lawyers appeared in the high court only in urgent matters.

Due to the protest, strict security arrangements were made in and around the IHC, with a heavy police contingent deployed and armoured vehicles stationed outside the court premises.

The issue of the strike also came up during the hearing of a civil case before Chief Justice Sarfaraz Dogar. Advocate Qaiser Abbas Gondal informed the court that the bar had called for a strike due to the arrest of lawyers.

When the chief justice asked which lawyers had been arrested, Gondal replied that Imaan Mazari and Hadi Chattha had been taken into custody. The chief justice then asked whether they were considered lawyers. No reply was given.

CJ Dogar observed that if the bar considered them lawyers, their representatives could convey their position in chambers.

*Ishaq Tanoli in Karachi also contributed to this report*

Human Rights Commission of Pakistan
10 YEARS OF PECA, 10 YEARS OF SILENCE
Stand with Iman Mazari and Hadi Ali Chattha
Stand up for freedom of expression
ایمان مزاری اور ہادی علی چٹھہ کے لیے آواز اٹھائیں
آزادی اظہار رائے کے لیے آواز اٹھائیں

MEMBERS of civil society hold a protest against the arrest of activists Imaan Mazari-Hazir and her spouse Hadi Ali Chattha at the Karachi Press Club on Monday.—PPI

# Federal court restrains ECP from proceedings against PTI MNA

• Reference alleges disqualification under Article 63(1)(k) due to lawmaker's past appointment as KP law officer • Petitioner argues Article 63(2) applies only to post-election disqualification

By Nasir Iqbal

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Constitutional Court (FCC) on Monday restrained the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) from proceedings further, pending final adjudication, against PTI lawmaker Sohail Sultan from Swat on a disqualification reference.

A two-judge Supreme Court bench, headed by Justice Aamir Farooq, also issued notices to the respondents while hearing an appeal filed by the lawmaker against the Peshawar High Court's (PHC) Dec 19, 2025 decision, which declined to assume jurisdiction under Article 199 of the Constitution in an election dispute.

The respondents named in the appeal include the federal government through law secretary, National Assembly speaker, ECP and Nasrullah Khan, who had earlier filed the disqualification reference against PTI lawmaker Sohail Sultan.

A three-member ECP bench, headed by Chief Election Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja and comprising Nisar Ahmed Durrani and Shah Muhammad Jatoi, is seized with the disqualification reference against Mr Sultan.

The PTI leader was elected as a member of the National Assembly from (NA-4 constituency) Swat. A reference under Article 63(2) was sent by the NA speaker to the ECP, alleging disqualification under Article 63(1)(k) on the basis of the lawmaker's previous appointment as a law officer in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP).

The petitioner challenged the reference, as well as the jurisdiction of the speaker and the ECP, before the PHC. Earlier, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly had enacted the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Appointment of Law Officers (Amendment) Act, 2024, whereby the definition clause was amended to clarify that the services of law officers of the KP Advocate General's Office do not fall within the "service of Pakistan". The amendment was given retrospective effect from Dec 4, 2014, expressly excluding law officers from the service of Pakistan.

In his appeal, the petitioner argued that the high court erred in law by declining to assume jurisdiction, despite the fact that the reference sent by the speaker under Article 63(2) was patently without lawful authority and coram non judice.

During the hearing, PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan appeared before the FCC on behalf of the petitioner and contended that Article 63(2) of the Constitution applies strictly to post-election disqualification. He urged that the high court should have entertained the plea and that the speaker should not have forwarded the reference to the ECP.

The petition further contended that the high court misdirected itself in law by holding that the ECP has jurisdiction to examine pre-election disqualification through a reference under Article 63, contrary to Article 225 and the settled constitutional scheme.

It was also argued that the high court failed to correctly interpret and give effect to the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Appointment of Law Officers (Amendment) Act, 2024, which is a declaratory statute with retrospective operation and expressly excludes law officers from the "service of Pakistan."

Moreover, the petition stated that reliance on the 1998 Muhammad Khursheed Khan judgement by the speaker is no longer legally sustainable after the enactment of the declaratory Act of 2024, which has removed the very basis of that judgement. It added that jurisdictional defects and constitutional violations are amenable to writ jurisdiction.

The petition further argued that the high court adopted a self-contradictory approach by acknowledging the need to determine the maintainability of the reference while refusing to adjudicate the issue itself, thereby perpetuating illegality.

Finally, the petition maintained that the speaker of National Assembly exceeded constitutional limits by forming an opinion on an alleged pre-election disqualification, a matter exclusively governed by Article 225 of the Constitution.

# Court cancels bail of Faiz Hameed's brother in fraud case

ISLAMABAD: A special court judge on Monday cancelled the bail of Najaf Hameed, the brother of a former Inter-Services Intelligence director general, and ordered his arrest in connection with a fraud case.

Special Judge Central Shahrukh Arjumand announced the order after a reserved verdict on a motion filed by the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) seeking the cancellation.

Authorities could not immediately arrest Najaf, the brother of retired Lt Gen Faiz Hameed, as he was not present in the courtroom when the verdict was announced.

The court had earlier granted Najaf interim bail based on a compromise claimed between the accused and the complainant. During the hearing, defence counsel informed the court that a settlement had been reached and requested confirmation of the interim bail.

The assistant director of legal, appearing on behalf of the FIA, opposed the plea. According to the FIA, a corruption case was registered against Hameed on Dec 31 on allegations of land fraud involving the transfer of property through forged documents.

The agency said the matter could not be resolved through an out-of-court settlement.—Staff Reporter

# Punjab revokes permission to keep pet lions

## Seven sent to jail on judicial remand in pet lioness attack case

By Zulqernain Tahir

LAHORE: Following back-to-back pet lion attacks in the provincial capital last week, in which two children suffered injuries, Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz on Monday ordered revocation of the legal permission to keep big cats in Punjab.

Separately, a magistrate sent seven people to jail on judicial remand for keeping of dangerous animals in residential areas.

Last week, a pet lion attacked an eight-year-old boy in the Sabzazar area of Lahore, in which he lost one arm.

According to police, Wajid Ali went close to the lion's cage while playing when it attacked him.

The lion chewed off the child's arm owing to improper enclosure arrangements and negligence by the owner.

The owner also hid the incident and misled authorities, claiming the boy was injured after his arm got stuck in a machine.

Due to the severity of the injuries, doctors amputated the child's arm to save his life.

In a similar incident, a pet lioness attacked an eight-year-old girl in the Bhekewal Pind area of Lahore and seriously injured her.

Police said the lioness was being shifted from one place to another by its owner in an auto-rickshaw when it became disturbed, broke free and attacked and injured the girl.

"Following such incidents, CM Maryam Nawaz on Monday decided to revoke the legal permission to keep pet lions across the province," the Punjab government said in a statement. She also directed that Wajid be provided with a modern bionic arm.

Police said they arrested the accused and registered an FIR against him.

The government said it had seized 59 big cats from different parts of the province and arrested 10 suspects for violating the SOPs on housing the animals.

**Judicial remand**

The local judicial magistrate sent a breeder, Fayaz alias Faizi, along with six other suspects to jail on judicial remand in a case involving the keeping of dangerous animals in residential areas, following a lion attack on a minor girl.

Police informed the court that the suspects had been interrogated and their further physical custody was not required. The police requested the court to send the suspects to jail on judicial remand.

Magistrate Hassan Sarfraz Cheema accepted the request and remanded the suspects to judicial lock-up, directing the police to produce them again upon completion of the remand period.

# Advanced passport monitoring system inaugurated

## Naqvi says aim is to provide citizens with secure and globally compliant services

By Iftikhar A. Khan

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Monday inaugurated a "state-of-the-art" monitoring system for passport applications, printing, and overall performance at the Directorate General of Immigration and Passports.

The minister was briefed in detail on the "Secure Hybrid Intelligence for Knowledge-based Response Analytics" (SHIKRA) system. According to a statement, a 24/7 monitoring room and call centre have also been made operational at the directorate.

On the directives of the interior minister, the emergency travel document system has also been digitised.

Mr Naqvi commended the Immigration and Passports director general and his team for introducing a technology-driven, modern monitoring system.

The minister stated that Pakistan's passport system has now been aligned with international best practices.

Under the new system, real-time monitoring of passport applications and deliveries, both within Pakistan and abroad, will be possible.

Every stage, from application submission to final delivery, will be monitored.

**Objective**

"Our objective is to ensure the provision of fast, secure, and globally compliant services to citizens. The modern monitoring system will further enhance the performance of the passport department," he said.

The security features of the Pakistani passport have been upgraded in accordance with ICAO standards.

The introduction of advanced automatic German machines has increased departmental capacity, while the automated passport printing process has completely eliminated human intervention.

The interior minister also visited the e-monitoring room, call centre, forensic lab, and modern production unit. During the briefing, officials informed him that the digital integrated dashboard will enable monitoring and evaluation of daily operations and staff performance.

Under the new monitoring system, automatic identification of crowding at passport offices will be possible. The Network Management System will also monitor backlogs and machinery status.

Apart from the Immigration and Passports DG, the Federal Investigation Agency DG, the Islamabad chief commissioner, the Islamabad Capital Territory police chief, and other senior officials were also present on the occasion.

# NA panel seeks to bar dual nationals from bureaucracy

• Votes 6-1 in favour of amending Civil Servants Act of 1973 • Mover Noor Alam Khan demands parity with constitutional ban on MPs • Cabinet Secretary Kamran Ali Afzal suggests judges should also be covered in the bill • Final procedural vote deferred to Feb 16 pending premier's review

Dawn Report

ISLAMABAD: A parliamentary panel on Monday moved to bar bureaucrats from holding dual nationality, voting overwhelmingly in favour of a bill restricting civil servants' citizenship status, though the committee chairman deferred a final procedural vote to allow for review by the prime minister.

The National Assembly Standing Committee on Cabinet Secretariat took up the Civil Servants (Amendment) Bill, 2024, moved by former Public Accounts Committee chairman Noor Alam Khan.

Khan, a JUI-F Member of the National Assembly, argued that because members of parliament and the armed forces are prohibited from holding dual citizenship, the bureaucracy should face identical restrictions to ensure uniform loyalty to the state.

Presently, Article 63 (1)(c) of the Constitution states: "A person shall be disqualified from being elected or chosen as, and from being, a member of the Majlis-i-Shoora (Parliament), if he ceases to be a citizen of Pakistan, or acquires the citizenship of a foreign state."

On the other hand, bureaucrats can be dual nationals. But, amendments have been proposed for a restriction on bureaucrats' dual nationality.

The bill, seen by *Dawn*, says: "This private bill seeks amendment in Section 5 of the Civil Servants Act, 1973 with a view to lay down an enabling provision so that a civil servant holding dual nationality or citizenship of any foreign country shall not be entitled for appointment."

Khan told the committee that equity must apply across state institutions. "And if this does not happen, parliamentarians should also be allowed to have dual citizenship," Khan said, adding that "there is no dual national in the armed forces".

During the discussion, PPP lawmaker Agha Rafiullah recalled that parliamentarians had been promptly unseated following a Supreme Court decision in a dual nationality case in the past.

PMLN's Tahira Aurangzeb supported the argument by citing her own family's compliance with the constitutional bar on legislators. She noted that her daughter, Punjab Senior Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb, "had to let go of her Australian citizenship to contest elections".

Cabinet Secretary Kamran Ali Afzal recommended that the cases of bureaucrats who possessed dual citizenship by birth should be reviewed rather than issued a blanket ban. He further suggested that if restrictions are applied, judges should also be covered in the bill.

Khan expressed reservations regarding the suggestion to review specific cases, advocating instead for ending dual citizenship for the individuals concerned.

Committee Chairman Ibrar Ahmed requested that the government share data regarding the number of bureaucrats possessing dual citizenship by birth.

"Bureaucracy and judiciary, too, should not have individuals having dual nationality," Ahmed said.

Eventually, six of the seven committee members voted in favour of the bill and against bureaucrats retaining dual citizenship.

However, Ahmed advised voting on the measure again at a meeting scheduled for Feb 16.

He said a report on the matter would be sent to the prime minister and that the voting could be held again after taking stock of the premier's view on the matter. The meeting ended with the committee members agreeing to the chairman's recommendation.